Third Annual Family Literacy Night A Success

By Alyssa Kenney

On Wednesday November 7th the Early Childhood and After School programs hosted Kennedy Heights Community Center’s 3rd annual family literacy night. The Girls Inc. group and Youth program middle school participants volunteered at the event. The family event attracted over 60 Kennedy Heights residents to the center for an evening of community literacy activities. The community center provided dinner and a variety of family literacy learning stations for all ages. Children created bookmarks, fished for words, played word BINGO, participated in a family story-time, and enjoyed musical performances that included both pop songs and Hmong traditional music and dance.

A huge thank you to the staff, the youth volunteers, United Way, and all the families that attended to make the event a success and a new Kennedy Heights tradition.

United Way of Dane County provided early literacy bags to distribute to every child. The bags contained crayons, paper, glue, puzzles, a book, and a list of activities for families to do together at home.

The Great Egg Drop

By Roy LaValley

On Tuesday December 4th, the Kennedy Heights Community Center Boys’ Club welcomed the Rosenberry Society volunteers to the Center to help us with the Great Egg Drop. Just after 5 o’clock the volunteers arrived and we quickly formed teams. Each program participant was paired with a volunteer and the rules were quickly explained.

The teams then dug in to their materials to construct an ERV (an Egg Re-Entry Vehicle) for their egg—a container that would keep the egg whole as it was dropped from the ceiling. Since points were also given for the creativity of the design, teams pulled out all the stops to make creative as well as functional designs.

With the ERV’s constructed, the boys and our volunteers ate pizza and talked for a bit. Then came the moment of truth. Boys and volunteers watched nervously as one by one, ERV’s were dropped, and then pulled apart and examined. In the end, every egg survived!

The boys and the volunteers both had a great time using their construction skills and their creativity. Thanks very much to the Rosenberry Society for braving the night’s horrible weather and helping to make the evening a success.

Thank You!
News From the Heights

Note from the Executive Director

By: Alyssa Kenney

Putting the newsletter together each quarter always fills me with pride and appreciation. Pride because the newsletter reminds me of how much good work the center does and appreciation because I realize how hard staff and volunteers work to make it all happen.

A couple of people who are not featured in any stories this month that need recognition are Eileen Rimson and LaDonna McReynolds. Eileen has been coordinating holiday gifts in the community for many years. And she did it again this year.

Coordinating the gift program is a lot of work, it involves door to door outreach, attending meetings, matching gifts and delivering presents to families. It takes a lot of time and gas. Thank you, Eileen, for your continued effort.

LaDonna McReynolds is the newest member of our Board of Directors. She was nominated and joined in November. She has already become an active food pantry volunteer and we are excited to welcome her to the Board of Directors.

Finally, I wanted to share an important experience with everyone. Over Martin Luther King Jr. weekend I attended a number of community events including the City-County celebration at the Overture Center at which Rev. Dr. Lowery gave the keynote address. At the end of the weekend I felt inspired and rejuvenated. Unlike many holidays that result in over eating and unnecessary buying, the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday was about giving of yourself and your time, celebrating community leadership both young and old; and promoting social justice. The holiday was void of consumerism and full of community. What a great way to celebrate.

Early Childhood Program

By: Kyle Kozelka

Despite attempts by Jack Frost, the Early Children’s Program has been able to brave the weather and take advantage of the snow that has fallen over Madison. The children have been sledding, building snowpeople and snow-forts and taking part in endless winter-weather activities. When the weather is not so kind, the children have been just as busy inside. Despite the long winter break, the children quickly adjusted back into the classroom and have continued to make great strides in their learning and progress. There have also been several additions to the class and these children are already at home within the classroom.

The children have continued receiving visits from Book Worms, a group of volunteers through UW Extension who come to the classroom and read a story to the children each month. Each child is given a copy of the book to take home and read with their families. Starting this month, a play literacy group from the Madison Public Library will be visiting the children and setting up themed play areas such as a grocery store, post office, and a garden. The children will be able to play and learn through a hands-on approach.

The classroom itself will also be going through some changes in the future. Kennedy Heights ECP has received a grant to fund the purchase of new art materials including a new art easel which will allow painting to be a staple activity within the classroom. Other changes planned for this year is the addition of a restroom to the ECP classroom, which may be more exciting for the staff than the children themselves. Rather than having to use the restroom upstairs, the children will now be able to have a restroom located within their own classroom.
Girls Inc. and Boys Group Partner with Sierra Club

By: Lisa DuChateau
Over the past two months both Girls Inc. and the Boys Group at Kennedy Heights have been partnering with Inner City Outings (ICO) of Madison. ICO is a local chapter of the Sierra Club that offers a variety of outdoor adventures—skiing, canoeing, camping, hiking, and many others—to urban youth in Madison. On a snowy December morning, youth from Kennedy Heights traveled to Governor Nelson State Park to try their hand (or foot) at snowshoeing.

The first challenge of the day was figuring out how to attach the snowshoes to our boots, but once we were set and comfortable in our new feet, there was a race to see who was the fastest snowshoer! Although it was a chilly day, the sense of accomplishment and the promise of hot chocolate kept the group going strong.

Ready to try another ICO adventure, we decided to go ice-skating at Tenney Park just last week. All laced up and ready to go, we raced, we twirled, we made ice angels and attempted our best belly-flop, and we even did a bit of skating. It was a perfect day and we were having so much fun, we did not want to leave.

Needless to say, we are excited and grateful for our new partnership with ICO and look forward to our monthly outings. This month we hope to go sledding and with spring just around the corner, who knows where they will take us next! For more information on ICO visit www.madisonico.org

Girls Inc. Loves Community Service

By: Cierra Chandler and Beatrice Elvord

On Monday, January 21, Kennedy Heights Girls Inc. received the Presidential Volunteer Service Award at the Urban League’s Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Service Day. We felt excited when we got the award because we were on stage and Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin presented it to us.

The workshops at the Youth Service day were fun, they were about girls groups and race and media. We marched to the capitol in the snow and got to see other kids sing and dance. They even fed us lunch!

We received this award because of the community service we have done. In October, we were part of the Girl Power “Trick-or-Treat So Others Can Eat” food drive. We delivered bags to other people’s houses in the neighborhood so they could fill them with food. Then we collected the bags for the food pantry.

In November and December, we went to Pierces grocery store to ring bells for the Salvation Army. That was fun because we were singing and dancing as people went in and out of the store. We feel good about ourselves when we help other people because they can get what they need and we make new friends. It makes others feel happy when we help others, too.
Kennedy Heights Resident Heads to New York City

By: Jody Schmitz

Cynthia Williams, who has lived at Kennedy Heights for 13 years will be leaving soon for New York city where she will start a job in the design industry. After attending neighborhood schools as a child, she graduated from East High School in 1998. She worked in several east side jobs before entering MATC in 2005 where she studied Fashion Marketing.

Graduating last December, she did an internship at Winter Silks as a Merchandize / Design assistant where she did trend research and designed sleep wear. Her position in New York is with BD Concept, European furniture, where she will be an Interior Design Consultant.

Congratulations, Cynthia, and best wishes in your new career!

After School Program

By: True Vang

All the children in the After School program have been having a really wonderful year. I hope they will continue to do well for the rest of the school year. The children always make me very proud to be the After School Coordinator.

Once again, I will be planning some end of the school year field trips for the After School program. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to come and chaperone the trips. I will be sending permission slips home in March.

This year the After School Program has many excellent volunteers and two social work interns that help out occasionally in the program. See the spotlight about Barb Pokorski on the next page. Other volunteers add special elements to our program from science activities, to music, to acting as a reading buddy for young children and even teaching origami.

Volunteers add their special talents and their precious time to our program. They help make our program work. Thank you!

The Kennedy Heights Football League

By: O’Sha Dancy & Michael Hongmanivanh

At Kennedy Heights we play football. We have been playing since September of last year. We have four teams: the Foot-Lockers, the Jokers, the Cybers, and the Dashers. Each team has played nine games. We take player and team stats, we learn about the game, and we teach each other. Then we bring it out to the field. Everyone in the KHFL has worked hard on the field and gotten fit.

At Kennedy Heights showing teamwork is key. We make sure that no one is put down. When there are problems on the field we usually resolve it without an adult needing to step in.

We also create our own logos. We search on the internet finding images for our team names. Pretty cool huh?

Another goal is we try to bring all boys together and to Kennedy Heights Community Center so we all can have a good time as a neighborhood.
Volunteer Spotlight—Barb Pokorski

By True Vang and Jody Schmitz

Barb Pokorski has been a Kennedy Heights volunteer in many programs over the last 4 years. Most recently Barb has been coming to the Kennedy Heights After School program to teach the second and third grade children knitting. With her help children have been creating scarves, purses, and other loom knit items. Before working with the After School program Barb did a quilting and sewing club for our middle school youth last summer. Youth made individual placemats and created a small quilt that hangs in the community center. Youth learned how to hand sew and how to use a sewing machine.

Barb first became a community center volunteer through our adult women’s group knitting circle. Every month, Barb comes and provides materials, instruction and support to community member knitters. She has provided project ideas and helped fix many dropped stitches. In addition, to all the craft instruction and material Barb has provided to the community center, she also provides homemade soaps to our weekly food pantry. Barb is a northside resident and a fantastic community center volunteer. Thank you Barb!

Center Wide Goals for 2008

By: Alyssa Kenney

Each year community center staff meet together to set center wide goals for the agency, each program also has their own goals. Lots of different ideas were considered, including getting a community center pet, hosting a community festival and many others. In the end the two center wide goals were set for 2008. To become a greener organization – we hope to create less waste and use less energy in 2008. To collaborate better with parents and area schools in 2008. Staff teams are spending the month of February to work out exactly how we will quantify and measure these goals. Do you have an idea about how we can reduce waste or decrease our carbon footprint? Do you have an idea about how we can increase parent and school involvement? Let us know. Look for more on center goals in future issues.

Farwell Ann

By: Jody Schmitz

Ann Lehmann, long-time resident of Kennedy Heights is moving out Kennedy Heights at the end of February. Ann was one of the founding members of the community center and the neighborhood association. She was a long time president of the Board of Directors and served in many other volunteer roles, including lawn mower, neighborhood watch organizer and fundraiser. Among her many contributions, Ann was instrumental in getting playgrounds put in on the Kennedy Heights property. Good luck and good health, Ann!
News From the Heights

Parenting Group Forming

By: Pazee Yang

There are several factors that contribute to challenges within parent-child relationships within the Hmong community. From past research and personal experience, I feel that one prominent factor is the inability to understand one another due to generational differences. As a first generation Hmong, I have experienced first hand how seriously these conflicts can escalate if no attention or intervention is given. Many residents of Kennedy Heights are either Hmong refugees or first generation Hmong. Many first generation Hmong children participate in community center programming. I am working with the Asian Outreach program to plan a special parenting workshop. Although I am in the early stage of planning, this workshop would be tailored to address issues surrounding the Hmong community. Some possible discussion topics are suicide, parenting teenagers and education. I plan to invite knowledgeable guest speakers from the community to speak with parents about these particular issues. I would like to include any residents who would be interested in helping me plan the workshop. Please feel free to contact me at 244-0767 the center if you are interested in helping or have any ideas.

Cooking Workshop

By: VamMeej Yang

The Asian Outreach program has been participating in cooking and nutrition classes. Over the last few weeks, we learned to make Thai and Lao dishes such as noodle and meat salad. Khamhou and her daughter Judy Chinnyavong shared the recipe with us and taught us. There were 14 students who attended and we also provided child-care for those with children. Everyone had a wonderful time.

We made cooked beef salad, raw beef salad, and papaya salad. We used Thai and Lao recipes and cooking techniques. Every student had a chance to cook and also learned to follow a recipe. Everyone was involved. All the students felt confident that they now know how to prepare the food and follow a recipe.

We are not finished yet, there are still more recipes we’re going to learn. We are going to do fry/boiling noodle (fawm kib thiab fawm), and soup (ua kees) for the next workshop. Please come and join us. Call VamMeej Yang @ 244-0767

Niam/Txiv Kev Txhim Kho

Muaj ntau yam ua rau niam txiv thiab menyuam tsis sib nkag siab. Kuv xav tias ib yam uas ua rau niam txiv thiab menyuam tsis sib haum yim lawv yug txawv sij hawm. Yog tsis muaj leej twg los siab xyuas cov tleetbeam no ces nws yuav ntau ntxiv. Vim tias muaj Hmoob coob nyob rau Kennedy Heights no, kuv xav tias yog muaj ib lub rooj cob qhia los qhia txog cov tleetbeam no, yuav pab tau peb txhua tus. Kuv tsis tau muaj sij haum ntau los xav txog lub rooj cob qhia, tiam sis kuv xav tias muaj ob peb yam uas txhua tus yeeg nyuaj siab txog piv txuv li kev xav tua yus tus kheej, kev qhuv qhia tub nxhais hluas thiab kev kwam ntawv. Kuv xav nhriav ob peb tus neeg uas paub txog tej yam no los pab tham nrog nej cov ua niam ua txiv. Yog koj muaj tej lub tsbw yim zoo uas koj xav kom peb nhriav neeg tuaj tham txog, los yog koj xav pab, thov hu rau kuv pem Kennedy Heights no, 244-0767.

Kawm Ua Zaub Mov Noj

Ntau lub as thiv tag los, peb tau kawm txog Thaib thiab Nplog cov zaub mov xws li yog khaub poob Thaib-Nplog thiab ua lav qnaij. Khamhou thiab nws tus nxhais Judy Chinnyavong tau tuaj koom peb thiab qhia peb ua. Peb muaj 14 tug lub nxhais tau tuaj kawm ua ke thiab peb tseem pab zov lawv cov menyam thiab. Yog ib lub sij hawm zoo kawg uas sawv daws tau tuaj sib cog kwam.

Nhawm no yig ib cov duab yees as thiv tag los. Peb kawm txog lav qnaij nyuj siav, lav qnaij nyuj nyooos, thiab tuav tas xooob. Peb tau uas raws li Thaib thiab Nplog daim ntawd qhia ua zaub mov noj. Txhua tus tub nxhais kawm ntawv tau nqes tes cev tes ua kiag los ua. Cia siab hais tias txhua tus menyam kwam ntawv yuav ua tau qnaij qab mus lawv yam tov ntej.

Peb tseem tsis tau tag, tseem tshuv ntau yam yuav kwam ntxiv. Peb yuav kwam ntxiv txog Thai-Nplog cov fawm kib, fawm hau, thiab kawm ua kees-Nqaij ua kua peb yuav kwam nyob rau lub hli tom ntej nov. Peb qheb qhov rooj lug tos txais koj tuaj kawm nrog peb. Yog muaj lus nug hu VamMeej Yang ntawm 244-0767.
News From the Heights

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Available

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program is a cooperative effort by the Internal Revenue Service to provide income tax assistance to low-income individuals, handicapped or elderly. Volunteers trained by the IRS and the Department of Revenue prepare basic income tax returns free of charge at VITA sites. Some sites offer free IRS electronic filing of tax returns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Days and Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial Education Center</td>
<td>Monday &amp; Wednesday 12-6pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2399 S. Park Street</td>
<td>Pib January 23 — April 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Madison Community Center</td>
<td>Tuesdays 1-6pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Straubel Ct.</td>
<td>Pib January 29 — April 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lakeview Library</td>
<td>Thursday 1:30—3:30</td>
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<tr>
<td>2845 North Sherman</td>
<td>Pib January 31 — April 10</td>
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Lub cai no yog lub cai yuav ua se. Yog nej leej twg tsis tau ua se es xav tau kev pab no ces hu tuaj rau Vam Meej los yog Paj Zib ntawm tus xov tooj 244-0767. Peb mam coj nej mus ntawm qho chaw ua se. Yuav muaj neeg pab dawb. Los yog koj xav mus koj, cov chaw

Volunteer Opportunities at the Center

The Kennedy Heights Community Center has many volunteer opportunities available. Interested individuals need to complete a short application and interview process. Some positions require longer term commitments and require training and other positions are short term and you can start immediately.

Interested in any position? Call Alyssa at 244-0767

Board of Directors
Help guide the direction of the community center and join our governing board. Monthly meetings on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Kennedy Heights residents are strongly encouraged to join.

Middle School Tutors
Help middle school students complete their homework, organize their assignments, and manage their time. Math and science tutors are strongly encouraged.

Food Pantry Shoppers
Help fill our food pantry shelves. Are you available Monday mornings to help shop and fill our pantry shelves? A drivers license desired and the ability to lift boxes of food is required.

After School Assistants
Assistant elementary school age students in having an enriching after school experience. Share an art form, teach a craft, coach a sport, act as a reading buddy, play board games, and inspire children to learn and have positive social experiences.

Calendar / Newsletter Distributors
Do you like to walk? We need community volunteers to distribute monthly calendar door to door in the neighborhood around the first of the month.

Breaking News
Hmong at Heart Back in Madison

Madison Children’s Museum (MCM) celebrates the return of the award-winning exhibit, Hmong at Heart, on Saturday, February 16, 2008.

Hmong at Heart brings to light five thousand years of the remarkable history and durable traditions of the Hmong. Kids can explore several interactive environments including a mountain-top Hmong village in Laos, a Thai refugee camp, and a Hmong American home.

The exhibit will be installed in Madison through August 2008.
Funding Received

Child Abuse Prevention Fund
The Early Childhood Program received a one-year $3000 grant from the Child Abuse Prevention Fund. The grant will be used to host more parent child activities such as field trips to the zoo, the Children’s Museum and other community events. The community center will also provide quarterly workshops and training opportunities for parents of children in the Early Childhood program on topics such as literacy, parenting, connecting to the school and other parent chosen topics. Thank you for this exciting opportunity to strengthen our program and relationship between parents and their children.

Madison Trust of the Brittingham Fund
For the second year in a row the Kennedy Heights After School program has received $4000 from the Madison Trust of the Brittingham fund. The 2008 grant was made possible by Mayor Dave Cieslewicz’s request to the fund. Thank you Mayor Dave! The grant supported the expansion of our After School program in 2007 and continues to provide expansion support in 2008. The grant pays for the additional snack, supplies and materials that are needed to serve 15 additional children each day. The Brittingham Fund along with support from the city of Madison helped us to expand the program and remove Kennedy Heights children from the waiting list.

Saint Dunstan’s Lutheran Church Foundation:
Thirty thousand pounds of food has been provided by Saint Dunstan’s Lutheran Church over the last three years. For three years Saint Dunstan’s has been providing support for our food pantry. Each year the pantry serves over one hundred families. Saint Dunstan’s ongoing support has helped us purchase food from Second Harvest food bank and has supported our Turkey Basket distribution over the Thanksgiving holiday. Their ongoing support has been critical to our success. Thank for the 2008 contribution to ensure our ongoing ability to meet the community’s food need.